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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 601  
By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor and salute legendary singer-songwriter  
and country music star, Stonewall Jackson.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause in our deliberations to salute the lives and accomplishments of our most prominent citizens; and

WHEREAS, Stonewall Jackson is one such estimable Tennessean who has brought much fame and honor to this state through his notable endeavors in country music; and

WHEREAS, on November 6, 1932, Stonewall Jackson was born to Waymond David Jackson and Lula Lorean Turner Jackson, who named their son in honor of the famous Confederate General, Thomas Nathan "Stonewall" Jackson; though coming from humble beginnings, it would be but a few short years before his name was known worldwide; and

WHEREAS, always a devoted patriot, Mr. Jackson's love for his country was such that he served for a short time in the United States Army before the Army learned that he was underage and sent him home; when he reached seventeen, he joined the United States Navy and served with honor in defense of freedom and America until reaching the age of twenty; and

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WHEREAS, in early November 1956, Stonewall Jackson moved to Nashville from Moultrie, Georgia and immediately took the country music industry by storm; as soon as he arrived in town, he drove his pickup to Acuff-Rose Publishing Company on Franklin Road and set in motion a remarkable chain of events that would catapult him to the pinnacle of country music only hours later; and

WHEREAS, Wesley Rose was so thoroughly impressed with the voice and the songs of the young Jackson that he immediately sent him to WSM Radio to meet with George D. Hay, "The Solemn Ole Judge," at the Grand Ole Opry; and

WHEREAS, one day after arriving in Nashville, Stonewall Jackson appeared on the famed Grand Ole Opry and thus made history as the only unknown artist ever to be signed to the Opry roster without first having a recording contract; he was an immediate sensation and performed four encores on his first Friday Night Opry in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jackson first set up residence in the Music City at Mom Upchurch's boarding house at 620 Boscoble Street, with Roger Miller as his first roommate; in January of 1957, he completed his first recording session at the famed Studio B, recording "Don't Be Angry"; and

WHEREAS, he continued his rapid ascent to stardom with his first number one record, "Life to Go," and he was named 1958's Most Promising New Artist; and

WHEREAS, that year was especially successful for Mr. Jackson, as he was joined in holy matrimony to his beloved Juanita Carmene Wair on July 8; and

WHEREAS, Stonewall Jackson displayed deep commitment to his work, and Mrs. Jackson displayed equally great devotion to her husband, as the young couple spent their wedding night on Ralph Emery's all-night radio show promoting Stonewall's new album; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, Stonewall's band changed its name from The Rolling Stones to The Minute Men, the name they still use to this day; and

WHEREAS, as his career progressed, Stonewall Jackson displayed remarkable staying power and a rare ability to transcend musical genres; and

WHEREAS, his records reached the *Billboard* Top Ten during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, a singularly remarkable feat; and

WHEREAS, his biggest hit, “Waterloo,” achieved a rare feat when it simultaneously appeared on three major national charts; the song reached the top position on the Country and Pop Charts and reached the top fifteen on the R&B Chart; and

WHEREAS, “Waterloo” was the No. 3 Song of the Year in 1959 and, even today, ranks No. 30 on *Billboard’s* “100 Songs of All Time”; and

WHEREAS, this gifted artist’s eighteen years on Columbia Records yielded more than fifty national chart singles, including an astounding fourteen number one hits; and

WHEREAS, his first smash hit, “Life to Go,” was a collaborative songwriting effort with George Jones, and his later hits have included such timeless works as “Why I’m Walking,” “I Washed My Hands in Muddy Water,” “Me and You and a Dog Named Boo,” “B.J. the D.J.,” “and “A Wound Time Can’t Erase”; and

WHEREAS, Stonewall Jackson has brought joy to millions worldwide; during his tours, he has entertained in England, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Germany, Holland, Italy, France, and Switzerland, and he has also performed at many renowned venues throughout America, including the Hollywood Bowl and Madison Square Garden, and Billy Bob’s and Gilley’s in Texas, setting attendance records at both Texas venues; and

WHEREAS, his unsurpassed fame led to appearances in two movies, *Country Music on Broadway* and *Sweet Dreams*, and on numerous television shows, including *Entertainment Tonight* and *Dick Clark’s American Bandstand*; and

WHEREAS, his first appearance on *American Bandstand* produced one of the humorous anecdotes for which he has become famous; when he wandered into the audience to watch the other performers, he was mobbed by screaming girls who were pulling at his clothes and trying

to get their hands on him; he remembers it as a shocking experience, but adds that he loved every minute of it; and

WHEREAS, another memorable occurrence involved Mr. Jackson's Cadillac stretch limousine, his friend "Red" Sovine, and two of Virginia's finest police officers; and

WHEREAS, early in his career, Stonewall Jackson purchased this used limousine to travel to concert dates; limousines were a rare sight in the rural South, and this particular model of Cadillac was reminiscent of the type of vehicle Al Capone might have used, needless to say, the limousine drew considerable attention in many of the smaller towns through which he passed; and

WHEREAS, late one night in upstate Virginia, two patrol cars stopped Mr. Jackson and Mr. Sovine in the limousine; one of the officers approached the car and asked to see Mr. Jackson's driver license; upon reading the identification, the bewildered officer commented, "Oh, Stonewall Jackson, huh? Well, if you're Stonewall Jackson, then who's that guy in the back, Abraham Lincoln?"; and

WHEREAS, the quick-witted Mr. Jackson replied, without missing a beat, "No, that's Woodrow Wilson," which was true, as Red's given name was Woodrow Wilson Sovine; and

WHEREAS, at first failing to recognize the humor of the situation, the officer responded, "Hey boy, are you smarting off to me?", at which point the whimsical Stonewall Jackson called upon his friend, Woodrow Wilson Sovine, to provide proof of his identity; once the situation had been explained, all of the involved parties enjoyed a hearty laugh over the proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Stonewall Jackson is still quite active in America's music scene; he continues to play the Opry, and his inspiring song "Jesus is my Life Line" reached the top spot on the Gospel Charts in 1999; and

WHEREAS, a Stonewall Jackson tribute album is in the final stages of development and will feature his songs being sung by many of today's hottest stars, including Garth Brooks; and

WHEREAS, his many professional accomplishments aside, Stonewall Jackson is wholly committed to perpetuating the highest standards of family and community values; and

WHEREAS, he is most grateful for the loving companionship of his wife Juanita; and is the devoted father of Stonewall Jackson, Jr. and proud grandfather of Savannah Carmene Jackson; and

WHEREAS, he is a devout Christian and his deep faith is evident in all of his endeavors, both public and private; and

WHEREAS, Stonewall Jackson is truly a living legend in country music, he has long served as an excellent ambassador for Tennessee and should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we join with the family, friends, colleagues, and fans of Stonewall Jackson in celebrating his magnificent career and countless accomplishments in country music; including 45 years as a member of the Grand Ole Opry, and applaud him for the courage and conviction with which he has so admirably lived the examined life.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our best wishes to him for much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.